recommendation letter) on the basis of their service records. However, services of Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj who was initially appointed on monthly wage/contract basis have been regularized with effect from the date of his initial appointment. The matter regarding granting same benefits to other similarly placed officers has been taken up with the Department of Personnel and Training and Ministry of Law and Justice.

Bed patient ratio in hospitals

†4530. SHRI LAJPAT RAI :
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the bed patient ratio in the country is less than WHO's norms;

(b) if so, the ratio of beds and patients as per WHO's norms;

(c) what is this average in India at present; and

(d) by when the above ratio is proposed to be achieved by the Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) to (d) The World Health Organization has informed that they have not set any norms for the bed-patient ratio. Besides, Bed patient ratio varies from case to case depending upon various factors like the type of disease, nature of specialization, type of patient-care required *viz.*, indoor/outdoor.

Import of unsafe food items

4531. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO :
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India is vulnerable to unsafe food imports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the action proposed to set up the infrastructure to test food samples like US corn, soya blends and other genetically modified crops and foods; and

(d) the action proposed to curb import of biologically unsafe foods ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) and (b) Imported food items are required to meet the standards prescribed in the Rules made under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 for all the products listed therein.

(c) The Department of Biotechnology is currently engaged in developing protocols using PCR and ELISA methods for identification of transgenic traits such as nucleic acids and proteins, respectively in Genetically Modified Foods and products derived therefrom through research and development endeavors at five institutions in the country. These are National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad, Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi and Industrial Toxicological Research Centre, Lucknow.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is also strengthening National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad for the establishment of a national facility for evaluation of safety of genetically modified foods. The proposal has been included in the Capacity Building Project for strengthening of Food labs in the country.

(d) The rule for the Manufacture, Use, Import and Storage of Hazardous Microorganism/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cell, 1989 notified under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986, restrict, a person from importing, manufacture, transport, storage, distribution or sale of any food, feed, raw or processed or any ingredient of food, food additives or any food product that contains GM material, without the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC).

Registration of Ultrasound Centres

4532. MISS MABEL REBELLO : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :